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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, ANNOUNCES STEPS TO ADDRESS RESULTS OF  
INVESTIGATION INTO DAVIS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GROUP VISIT ON MAY 16, 2019**

BOSTON (May 24, 2019)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), has concluded its investigation into a school field trip organized by the Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy (DLA) on May 16, 2019. The MFA is releasing its findings after reviewing extensive video footage, conducting in-depth interviews with staff and visitors, and collaborating with the school. Upon learning of the class's experience, Museum leadership immediately contacted school officials to apologize. Since that day, the MFA has re-created the group's entire three-hour visit via security footage and spoken with dozens of people who interacted with them. The Museum has conducted this investigation according to standard internal procedures, but acknowledges that in today's world this process is too slow, especially considering the involvement of young students.

"I've just spoken to Christopher Coblyn and Arturo Forrest at the school to apologize again on behalf of the MFA. I have requested an opportunity to meet with students at the school next week," said Matthew Teitelbaum, Ann and Graham Gund Director. "These young people left the Museum feeling disrespected, harassed and targeted because of the color of their skin, and that is unacceptable. This is a fundamental problem that we will address as an institution, both with immediate steps and long-term commitments. I am deeply saddened that we've taken something away from these students that will be hard to get back."

In addition to releasing the details surrounding the four specific racist incidents that were reported, the MFA is committing to taking action steps that address them. This includes serving no-trespass, cease-and-desist letters to two visitors who used offensive and inappropriate language when they came into contact with the students, changing protocols and procedures for frontline staff and guards, articulating our expectations for visitor, staff and volunteer behavior, and enhancing ongoing training for all staff and volunteers. The MFA welcomes 60,000 schoolchildren annually who represent future audiences of the Museum, and is dedicated to ensuring that they feel protected and safe.

The MFA investigation focused on four racist incidents that were reported to a team of senior MFA managers on the afternoon of Thursday, May 16:

- The MFA has determined that Museum visitors made racist comments to DLA students on two separate occasions. We have identified the patrons who made the disparaging remarks and revoked their membership, banning them from the Museum's grounds. We will serve them with a no-trespass cease-and-desist notification.
- The school group reported that when the students arrived at the Museum, they were told "no food, no drink, no watermelon." The employee who greeted the group recalled relaying as part of standard operating procedures that "no food, no drink and no water bottles" were allowed in the galleries. There is no way to definitively confirm or deny what was said or heard in the galleries. Regardless, the MFA is committed to providing additional training for all frontline staff on how to engage with incoming school groups about policies and guidelines. These guidelines are in place to ensure the comfort and safety of all visitors and staff, as well as the protection of objects in our care.
- The students visited a number of galleries and special exhibitions during their trip. These spaces were patrolled by 13 separate security guards who were all stationed in designated areas. During this time, guards went on and off break and occasionally overlapped as they moved from one area or another. Based on surveillance footage, it is understandable that, because of this movement, the students felt followed. That was not our intention. It is unacceptable that they felt racially profiled, targeted and harassed. In response, the MFA is taking a number of steps to adapt security procedures—specifically designed to make sure that all people feel welcome, safe and respected at the Museum. This includes additional training for guards in how they engage with visitors inside and outside the Museum, as well as reviewing how guards are instructed to patrol the galleries.

The Museum is working with outside experts on continued mandatory unconscious bias training, conflict resolution training, and sexual harassment training for all staff. In addition, the Museum is reviewing all visitor touchpoints to ensure that every visitor's experience from entry to exit is positive and welcoming. Internally, the Museum was already in the process of launching an independent employee engagement survey to solicit confidential feedback about our workplace. Externally, the MFA will continue to develop roundtables of outside groups, which have been gathered in recent months to advise on exhibitions and programming.

MFA staff will dedicate itself to this work over the coming weeks, months and years, knowing that there will always be room to improve protocols and procedures to better reflect the Museum's institutional values of inclusion, care and shared accountability. The MFA works in service to visitors and will continue to regularly assess how to improve their experience by anticipating and responding to their needs.